

# HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

## MONASTERY ROAD BRIDGE

HAER No. PA-628

LOCATION: Spanning Pennsylvania Railroad (now Conrail) at Monastery Road (Township Road 898), Lloydsville vicinity, Unity Township, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania

UTM: 17.630872.4463558, Latrobe, Pennsylvania Quad.

STRUCTURAL  
TYPE: Warren deck truss

DATE OF  
CONSTRUCTION: Late nineteenth century

BUILDER: Pennsylvania Railroad Company

OWNER: Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania

USE: Vehicular bridge

SIGNIFICANCE: Monastery Road Bridge is a rare example of a pin-connected deck truss railroad bridge adapted for re-use as a roadway bridge. This site is of historical interest for its association with the Pennsylvania Railroad and Saint Vincent Archabbey, the first Benedictine monastery in North America.

HISTORIAN: Researched and written by Lola Bennett, April-May 2006

PROJECT  
INFORMATION: The Pennsylvania Historic Bridges Recording Project III is part of the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), a long-range program to document historically significant engineering and industrial works in the United States. HAER is administered by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, a division of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation funded the project.

## **Chronology**

- 1789    Unity Township incorporated
- 1790    Saint Vincent parish founded
- 1845    America's first all-iron railroad bridge built at Philadelphia
- 1846    Saint Vincent Monastery founded  
         Pennsylvania Railroad incorporated
- 1848    Warren truss patented
- 1851    Pennsylvania Railroad Engineer Oliver W. Barnes plats Town of Latrobe  
         Pennsylvania Railroad begins manufacturing iron bridges
- 1852    Pennsylvania Railroad main line completed
- 1855    Latrobe population 800
- 1860s   Pennsylvania Railroad begins replacing wooden bridges with metal spans
- 1867    Monastery Road appears in Beers' *Atlas of Westmoreland County*
- 1876    North end of Monastery Road straightened by this date
- 1895    PRR Annual Report states "On the Western Division ... the wooden overhead bridge at Sloan's Cut was replaced with an iron structure"
- 1900    Pennsylvania Railroad begins replacing metal bridges with masonry spans
- 1995    Monastery Road Bridge determined eligible for listing on the National Register
- 2002    Pennsylvania Historic Bridges Recording Project III